

R. Smith

SE R M O N

P R E A C H E D.

I N

CHRIST'S CHURCH

D U B L I N.

At the Consecration of the Right Reverend
Father in God, JOHN Lord Bishop of
O S S O R Y.

↑
Hartstone

By EDWARD WALKINTON, D. D.
Arch-Deacon of that Diocese.

D U B L I N,

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REVEREND BISHOP
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Dr. ROBERT BURGESS
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TO SR. STANDISH HARSTONGE BARONET, ONE OF
THE BARONS OF THEIR MAJETIES COURT OF
EXCHEQUER, IN IRELAND.

STR.

I Believe all that know my Obligations to You, for Your Kindness, and Bounty even from my Child-hood, will easily allow, that I ought not to deny any just Request of Yours: and the manner of Your Desiring that this Sermon should be Printed, with Respect to the Occasion of it, the circumstances of the Time, and Place at which, and the Persons before whom You were pleas'd to make it Your Request, are yet further Arguments to persuade 'em, that I could not refuse it, without the greatest rudeness, and ingratitude.

This is all the Apology, that I need make for troubling the Press a second time, and thus much (since it is both a just and true one) I ought to make, together with this solemn protestation, (which is as true) that neither the vanity of appearing in Prints, nor any Extraordinary opinion of my performances in this kind, was the Inducement; Nothing in the World, but this one Consideration, that I ought to deny You nothing. As to the Sermon it self, I have no Advertisement to give concerning it, but this, that a particular friend of mine, whose Judgment, and sincerity, I have a very great value for: was pleas'd to tell me, that he believ'd, the Dissenters from the Church, would look upon themselves, as ill us'd by me, for that I had Tax'd their Party with Antimonarchical Principles, and Designs, but when I had given him the following answer, he was satisfied,

satisfi'd, and that was this, that the reasons of that accusation were urg'd, in terms of sufficient restriction, to those only, whose turbulent and seditious carriage, was Remarkable under every Government, who both by their Writings and Practices, declar'd themselves Enemies both to our Civil and Ecclesiastical settlement, and that therefore I hop'd, those whose moderation, and love of Peace, had sufficiently distinguish'd 'em from these Men, would by no means look upon themselves as concern'd in any thing that I had said.

And Sir, if You had been pleas'd, to have interpos'd Your Advice in this matter, or any other thing relating to what I here present You with, You may assure Your self, that I should have paiz'd as much deference to Your Judgment, as I have respect, and honour for Your Person.

I am Sir
Your Obedient and Obliged Servt
EDW. WALKINTON.

MAT. XVIII. ver. XVII, XVIII.

But if he neglect to bear the Church, Let him be to Thee as an Heathen Man, and a Publican.

Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on Earth, shall be bound in Heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on Earth shall be loosed in Heaven.



THE Attempts that have been Made by the Enemies of this Church, to shake the Foundations of her Peace, to disturb her Order, and break her Unity; that Peace, Order, and Unity, which are the Blessed effects, of the Old primitive Apostollick Government, and Discipline, which she has so wisely, and happily Preserv'd; these bold and unweari'd Attempts, I say, make it Necessary for us, who are her Sons, upon all just, and fair occasions, to assert her great Charter, that Christ has given her, to vindicate the Power, and Authority of our spiritual Pastors, and especially at such a time as this, when a Reverend Person is to be taken into the *Consortium Episcopatus* (as St. Cyprian call's it) to put the People in mind of the Duty they owe 'em, and that by virtue of an express Divine precept, as they tender the Peace of the Church, the welfare of their Souls; and the continuance of those spiritual Blessings, which are the inseparable consequents of the True, and Genuine Ordinances of God: from which Ordinances, and from all Communion, and Fellowship with the Faithful, they are to be Excluded

and look'd upon as Heathens and Publicans, that is, desperate and profligate Persons, who refuse to hear the Church; and whatsoever censures shall be inflicted on such, for their Contumacy, by those who are lawfully Impowr'd to do it, our Saviour here Declares, that He will Ratisfy, and Confirm 'em in Heaven.

I know very well that some celebrated Commentators upon this place, who are no great Friends to Church Power, will have this Declaration of our Saviours, to refer to the *Confessorial Power* among the Jews, of Deciding Quarrels, and Controversies between private Persons; and that the Power of the Keys was not here thought of by him: and they are very well pleased to find, that some of the Antient Fathers, particularly *St. Chrysostom, and St. Austin*, seem to favour this Interpretation, when they say, that the Binding and Loosing here mentioned, belongs to the Person offended, and that whatsoever he do's in that matter, God will justify. But this undoubtedly, is a very forc'd, and unnatural Exposition, and must needs come very short of our Saviours meaning.

For I. There is no reason assign'd, or so much as pretended for this Interpretation, but barely the occasion of this Passage, which (it is true) was the matter of forgiving injuries, and the method of Reconciling disagreeing Persons. But may not we very well imagin that our Saviour, taking occasion from hence to mention the Church, that is, the Governours of it, whose Duty, and Care it should be, to promote that Peace, and brotherly love, which is the True badge, and cognizance of Christ's Disciples, should proceed to Declare the Power and Authority which he thought fit to confer upon 'em for this purpose; together with the Penalty proper to be inflicted on such, as should refuse to submit to their Decision, how far he resolv'd to interest himself, in Vindication of this Power, and that their decrees should be Confirm'd in his Heavenly Kingdom; and what is all this, but a very just and natural Transition?

II. If the party offended, or trespass'd against, be the Person supposed to have the Power of Binding and Loosening *hers*, our Saviours Discourse will appear very loose, and incoherent; for then the sense will be this: If thy Brother trespass against thee, Expostulate with him privatly; if he refuses to hear thee, do it before Witnesses; if he regard not them, make the matter known to those who have Authority over him, but if he refuse to hear them, then, whatsoever, *not they*, but *thou*, even thou the aggrieved party, shalt Determine concerning him, whether to his prejudice, or in his favour, that I will Ratis, and Confirm in Heaven. How much more proper, and reasonable is it for Authority to determine the Penalty, and the Terms of Reconciliation, as well as the Issue of the Controversie? and how much more agreeable to the Wisdom, and Majesty of God, to ratify the determinations of those, whom he had intrusted with the Power of Governing, rather than those of any private Person whatsoever?

III. This interpretation is manifestly against Grammar, for the party trespass'd against, is spoken of all a long in the singular Number. *If thy Brother shall trespass against thee, if he shall hear thee, thou hast gain'd thy Brother; but if he will not hear thee, then* ~~is~~ ^{is} in the singular number, that is, tell it thou to the Church, but when the matter of Binding and Loosing comes to be mentioned, then he speaks in the plural number, not whatsoever thou shalt bind, but whatsoever ye shall bind on Earth, shall be bound in Heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on Earth, shall be loosed in Heaven.

IV. The Parallel places of the Gospel, wherein the power of the Key's is acknowledg'd to be understood, (which are but two more besides this, Mat. 16. 19. & Joh. 20. 23.) the same phrase of Speech, together with the same promise, of confirming that in Heaven, which shall be decreed by them on Earth, is expressly made use of, first to *St. Peter*, at his famous Declaration of his Faith, and afterwards to all the Apostles together, at the time when he Breath'd the Holy

Ghost.

Ghost upon 'em; a thing never so much as mention'd, to belong to any private Person whatsoever, though never so Extraordinarily gifted, or qualified, nor ever understood by any ancient Wrirer, to be meant of any other Power, than that, which was committed to the Apostles, and to be derived from them to their Successors, for the Government of the Church. From all which it is very Plain, that some Extraordinary Power, is by these Words of our Saviour, Declar'd, and Conferr'd. I call it extraordinary, and more than of common Importance; because He expresses such a concern for it, and the just exercise of it, that He Promises to Vouch, and Stand by it, in the great Court of Heaven, from whence there shall be no appeal. It is likewise as plain, that this Power is not vested in the offended party, but in the Church; and that not the Church diffusive, to whom the exercize of Authority, and Jurisdiction cannot properly belong; but in the Church Representative, that is, the Respective Governors, of this great *Body Politick*, to whom the Right, and Exercise of that Spiritual Dominion, is committed, which is necessary for its Being, and Preservation?

This being premis'd, as the undoubted sense, and import of our Saviours Words, the method in which I intend to proceed, shall be this.

1st. I shall inquire into the nature, and extent of this Power of *Binding*, and *Loosing*, and shew, that to submit to this Power, is that which is here meant, by hearing the Church.

2d. I shall from hence enquire, and soondiscover, who those are that neglect to hear the Church, together with the Penalty that they are here declar'd to incur.

3dly and lastly, I shall consider, the fatal Mischief's, that have been, and still are the certain, and unnoubted Consequences, of not hearing the Church.

First, as to the Nature and Extent of this Power, the Persons to be Invested with it, and that a due submission to their Authority, is that which is here meant, by hearing the Church:

Church: we are to take notice, That the State, and Design of the Christian Religion requires us to consider God under a twofold Regard, not only as He is a *Governour*, but as He is a *Covenanter*, I say as He is a *Covenanter*; for though the right of Infinite and Eternal Dominion, must undoubtedly belong to Eternal and Infinite Power, and are Terms in their very notion, inseparable; yet such is the Mercy, and Goodness of God, that He will seem to Descend from his Greatness, by endeavouring to Endear Himself to us, so, as that our Hearts may be affected, with Love, and Kindness towards His milder, Attributes, of Goodness, and Mercy; and not altogether with Terror and Dread of His Infinite Power, Justice, and Greatness. To this end I say, He is contented to put Himself (as it were) upon equal Terms with us, to Enter into Conditions of *Stipulation* and *Contract* with His poor creatures, to bind Himself by Promises, and those Solemn and Sacred, Ones too, to Reward us Inestimably, for performance of those Duties, to which He had all the right in the World to Command, and Compell us; and because He knows the Weakness of our Natures, and our proneness to Transgress, He do's by the terms of this *Covenant*, Propose to us, a method, of reconciling our selves to His Favour again, by Repentance, and Amendment, and by the Participation of some external *Federal Rites*; which He has appointed, as visible Signes of our Fellowship, and Communion with the Rest of His Family. And as we are to give our constant, and personal attendance to the outward performance, of our part of these Duties, as well as to approach 'em with all the inward uprightness, and sincerity of Heart, which so Great and Important a Business requires, and the All-seeing Majesty of Heaven Expects; so He has taken Care (being Invisible Himself) to have His part of the Covenant, transacted, by Persons appointed for that purpose, who are to offer it to us, and to exact the acceptance of it as we tender the Blessings that are annex'd to it, and as we Dread the consequences, that must needs

needs follow our *Disregard*, or *Want* of the Holy Ordinances of God. These are the *Rewards* and *Punishments* of Christ's Spiritual Kingdom: and in the due, and equal distribution of them, consists that Povver of *Binding*, and *Loosing*, vwhich He has committed to His Church, and vwhich is to Continue vwith it, to the End of the World. But if the Povver of distributing Revvards, and Punishments, be the Highest visible Povver of every *Body Politick*; then vwho those are, to vvhom this is committed, Who those are vwho are Intrusted, and appointed for the Outvvard Transaction of this Covenant on God's Part, Whose *Acts*, and *Deeds*, He has Oblig'd Himself by vertue of this Covenant to Ratify, and no other, will soon appear, which was the next thing to be Inquir'd into.

And Who should those be, but the *Governours* of the *Church*? Who speak to us the Word of God, and who Watch for our Souls, who are mark't out to us in Scripture under certain Titles, and Characters, that denote both the Dignity, and Duty of their High and Important Calling, such as *Leaders*, *Guides*, *Overseers*, *Stewards*, *Governours*, *Elders*, and several others, vwhich the Greek Tongue affords, in great Emphasis, and variety. It is true indeed, We have not the exact and particular Form of Church Government, in all its Parts, and Circumstances, set dovvn, and Commanded in Scripture; nor an exact Digest, of all those Canons, and Constitutions, which should be from time to time Necessary for the Government of the Church; nor indeed can it in reason be Expected, that they should be there set dovvn, if we consider that the *Gospels* and the *Acts of the Apostles*, are brief Historical Narratives, of the Life of our Saviour, and the first Promulgation of the Christian Faith, and the *Epistles* are most of them Written to several Churches, after they had been Planted, and Settled, from the scope and general Design, of all which, as well as from some particular express places, where there is just occasion for it, may be very easily gather'd, that a Form of Church Government, and that the very same which we at this Day enjoy, was really Appointed, and Establish'd even in the Apostles time. For

For where there is occasion of mentioning those Superior Officers, to whom a more than ordinary Superintendency was thought fit to be committed, the Scripture is far from being silent in this Matter: as in the case of Dangerous Schisms, or where some Enormous crimes were to be prevented, or *Punisht*, or *Abuses reform'd*, or Officers appointed, as in the Churches of *Corinth*, *Crete*, and *Ephesus* particularly. In these two last, it is very plain, that *Titus*, and *Timothy* were appointed to Govern as Bishops, by *St. Paul* himself; and the nature, and extent of their Power is easily gathered, from the Instructions given to 'em in those *Epistles*, that bear their Names.

He tells *Titus*, that he had left him in *Crete*, that he should *Ordain Elders in every City, as He had appointed him*; and then proceeds to Direct him, in the choice of such Persons, as he should lay hands on, and set apart for that Holy Office, that he should Convince the gainsayers, Silence the false Teachers, cast out the Obstinate, and Refractory, and Reject the Heretick, after the first and second admonition, and to let him understand, that his jurisdiction was not precarious, neither founded in the consent, or choice of the People, nor co ordinate with the other *Elders*; He tells him, that he must *Exhort, and Rebuke with all Authority*.

These are the minutes of his Instructions, for which this *Epistle* was Design'd, and they contain in 'em, the summ, and substance of *Episcopal Power*.

To *Timothy* he is more large, and particular; and in many instances Declares the greatness of the Power committed to him, as appears by the Instructions he gives him for the Administration of it, and the manner of his Exercising his Authority over the *Interior Clergy*: as that he should be tender, and cautious, in Receiving informations against 'em; that he should Reprove 'em, but not sharply; that he should Admonish 'em mildly of their Duty; that he should take Heed to reward Men according to their Merits; and Account those that Rul'd well to be worthy of double Honour; that he should censure Notorious Sinners openly; that he should be cautious in his Ordination's of Men to the Holy Office, and therefore that he should lay Hands suddenly on no Man, nor

Remove the Church censures but upon Mature deliberation, that he should be Careful in the Election of the Widows ; that the Publique Liturgies should be carefully Compl'd, so that *Prayers and Supplications* might be made, not only for all Men in general, but particularly, and especially for those that are in Authority. In short, that he should Govern his Church Prudently and Justly, and do all things without prejudice, or partiallity.

These Instructions being allgiven Immedately to *Timothy* himself, without any the least mention being made, of any Person to be joyn'd in Commission with him, together with the Direction of the *Epistle* to him, as the first Ordain'd *Bishop* of the *Church* of the *Epheſians*, and the Univerſal consent of Antiquity, is abundantly ſufficient, to ſhew, that *Episcopal Government* was ſetled in the *Church*, even in the Apostles time ; that the Successors of these *Bishops*, are the proper Pastor's of Christ's Flock ; that their Authority, is Christ's Authority ; and that therefore it is, that he obliges himself to Ratify, and Confirm, whatſoever shall be done by them, in the due, and just Exercise of it.

If these plain and clear Intimations from Scripture, be not ſufficient, to evince the Truth of this Matter, let us consider the State of the *Church*, in the Age next after the Apostles, and we ſhall find, that wheresoever the Sound of the *Gospel* came, and Prevail'd ſo Far, as to have any thing like the Face of a *Church*, this Government obtain'd. That there are not the leaſt Foot-ſteps, of any other Form of *Church Government*, either Recorded in Scripture, or expreſſly ſet down, in any Antient *Church History*, now extant in the World, is agree'd on all Hands : ſo that it muſt needs follow, that if *Episcopacy* were an Innovation, it was a very early one : but if we could be ſo unreasonable, as to imagine that notwithstanding all this, ſuch a thing might be, thought to us unknown, Let us but consider, how Incredibile, and almost next to Impossible it is, that in ſo ſhort a time, as one century of Years, or leſs, all the *Churches* in the World, and ſome of 'em Great, and Famous ones too, ſhould univerſally Conſpire to change the Form of Government, that Christ, and His Apostles had Appointed, that the Christians of *Jeruſalem*, *Antioch*, *Alexandria*, *Ephesus*, *Corinth*, and *Rome*,

Rome, Places so far distant, and all Churches Planted by the Apostles themselves, should lay their Heads together, to abolish a Divine Institution, only to set up in the Room of it, *Antickristian Prelacy*, as some are pleas'd to call it, nay and to effect it too, in so short a time, without any noise, or opposition, that ever we could hear to have been made to so bold, and sacrilegious an Attempt. This is a thing so Ridiculously incredible, that to mention it, is to confute it, for though Heresies, and Errors, and dangerous Ones too, crep't in, and Increas'd, soon after the Apostles time; yet Power, and Authority are Nicer things, and not so easily parted with, as speculative Truths; and Men are generally so fond of the Right, and Exercise of Dominion, that all Innovations, and Usurpations in Government, are Works of time, and great difficulty, and never fail to meet with the greatest Opposition, that can possibly be made against 'em. As therefore the Innovation must needs be very early; so likewise if it were an Usurpation upon the Rights of others, 'tis strange, that we could never yet hear, who were the first Instruments, and Contrivers of such an Audacious undertaking, nor with what fraud, or force they Indeavour'd to introduce it; but on the contrary, the most Antient, and undoubted Accounts we have, of the Rise, and Progress of the *Christian Faith*, find these Men, whom we Call *Bishops* in the quiet, Uncontested Possession of their Respective Churches; and the most violent Hereticks, as well as the Orthodox Christians, all submitting to their Authority, as such; and if at any time, for the pretended Personal Defects, or Incapacity of the Man, or for purer Ordinances, or upon any other Seditious account, the Disturbers of the Churches Peace, separated from their Bishop, they still set up an other Bishop of their own Factiion, against him, they never Canton'd his Diocese, into separate Independent Congregations, nor set up a co-ordinate Authority in joyn't Commission with him, which is in the Room of a Thousand Demonstrations, that this is the very Government, that Christ, and His Apostles thought fit to appoint; and that those whom He thought fit to Invest with this Authority, and their Successors, are the Church, which He has Commanded us to Hear, under the

Penalty of being Disfranchis'd of all the Privileges, and Immunities of his Dutiful, and Loyal Subjects ; which is the thing here meant by being Reputed a *Heathen Man, and a Publican* ; that to Despise them, is to Despise Him, that He is Resolved to Vouch, and Justify their Authority, and that whatsoever they shall *Bind*, and *Loose* on Earth, He will *Bind*, and *Loose* in Heaven.

And so we come in the next Place to Consider, who those are that neglect to Hear the Church ; and of these there are several Classes, or Degrees, who are more, or less Faulty in themselves, or Mischievous to our common Christianity, according to the Interests they Espouse, or the Principles upon which they Pretend to Found their Disobedience.

And first, those may be very Properly said not to to Hear the Church, who go on in an Habitual Sinful course of Life, without any regard to the Exhortations, and Instructions of their Spiritual Pastors ; who Profess to Mind the meer Form, and Outside of Religion, without any Hopes, or Desires of profiting by the Holy Ordinances of God, which by their Ministry is Daily dispens'd to 'em. These Men, though they do not endeavour to distinguish themselves, by setting up a Faction, or Stated opposition to the Polity of the Church, and as they foolishly Excuse themselves are no bodies enemies but their own, yet they ought to consider, that their *Church Membership* will be so far from being a good Plea, at the Great and Terrible Day, that it will increase their Guilt, for that they knew, and were Daily Instructed in *their Masters will, and did it not*, that they Profess'd Christ in Words, and deny'd Him in their Actions, that they were Christians in Speculation, but Infidels in Practice.

Another sort of Men who neglect to hear the Church, (at least to hear it as they should do,) are those, who are contented indeed to submit to those Civil Sanctions, which the Temporal Government has Enacted, to enforce the Churches Canons, and Constitutions ; but never regard her Authority, as deriv'd from God. These are the Disciples of *Yorstius*, and *Erasmus*, who at length by a Chain of false Reasoning, have wrought themselves into *Socinianism*, and *Deism*, and what not. These Men will tell you that the Church

Church censures are nothing, any farther than they are Warranted by the Law of the Land ; that as to the Influence they may have upon a Mans spiritual Condition, they signify but little ; that Excommunication is but a *brutum fulmen*, an empty clap, that has no Bolt, but what follows it out of *Chancery*, that if a Man can avoid that, he is well enough, that every thing more than this, is *Priestcraft* and a Trick to delude the Ignorant multitude. I must confess indeed, if the Christian Religion were a meer Humane Invention, in which God had no way's intermedled, but lest it wholly to his Temporal Vicegerents to contrive, this perhaps might appear a very Reasonable Hypothesis : but if we take it, as it is deliver'd to us by Christ, and His Apostles, we shall find the matter quite otherwise; for there is nothing more clear, and Manifest in Scripture, than that our Blessed Saviour did confer an Authority, and Right of Jurisdiction on His Apostles, and they on their Respective Successors, quite Distinct from the Temporal Power; and that they Exercis'd this Power, against the will, and Express command of the Civil Magistrate, so far, as was Necessary for the Spiritual Welfare of their several Flocks, and though they never Resus'd their *Passive Obedience* to the Secular Power, where the Laws were against em; yet where their Active Obedience was Requir'd, they always Declar'd, That *God was to be Obey'd, rather than Man*. This was their Practice all along before the Emperors became Christians, when the Profession of their Religion, was Expressly against the Laws, they Constituted Bishops, Planted Churches, and Enacted such Canons, and Constitutions, as they thought Necessary for the Edification of their Respective Flocks, and the Propagation of their most Holy Religion; and the Success of their endeavours Answer'd their Expectations, or rather indeed out-went em; for the Miraculous spreading of the *Christian Faith*, without any Human Force, or Law, or Artifice to support it, became at last the unanswerable Argument, that *it was from God*. Tis true indeed, their Canons (that is the Penalties that were made to inforce 'em) did not touch Mens Lives, and Estates ; but their Souls and Consciences, they had a Powerful influence upon, as appear'd by that universal Conformity, and Deference,

Tence, that was paid to 'em. But these perhaps are but weak Arguments, to the Men I am now speaking of, who if they can secure their Lives, and Estates, from being touch'd, are seldom at leisure, to think of their Souls, and Consciences; these are but immaterial things, not so visible, and palpable as those, and therefore they seem to Resolve, to take care only of those things, which they have in present Possession, but for ~~matter~~ reversion, let 'em take their hazard. Against such as these, I shall make use of no other Argument, but this, to advise 'em, to examin themselves through'y, and perhaps they will then find, that their Lusts, and Passion's, are the best Arguments they have, and that a Resolution to Indulge 'em is the grand Principle, upon which they have founded their Hypothesis.

A third sort of Men, that neglect to hear the *Church*, are those, who under the pretence of a Scrupulous and Tender Conscience, have set up a Right, to despise all Laws, Ecclesiastical, and Civil, that concern Religion, and because God onely has the Empire over Conscience, therefore with them, Schism, and Disobedience in nothing else, but an asserting Gods Prerogative, against the Incroachments of Men; and this Doctrine some have Improv'd so far, as to proceed from private Disatisfaction, to set up *Altar* against *Altar*, and to Rend the Church of God, into Fierce, and Angry Factions; amongst whom, the Power of Godlynes seems to consist in nothing else, but a zealous, obstinate Adherence, of every Man, to his party, without any Regard to that Holy Faith, which is no other way to be held, but *in Unity of the Spirit, in the Bond of Peace, and in Righteousness of Life.* When the Apostle St. Jude had given a large, and just Description of those Men, which should appear in the last Days, to Disturb, the Churches Peace, after he has told us that they should *despise Dominion, and speak evil of Dignities*, that they should be *Murmurers, Complainers, Mockers*, and the like, he conclud's their Character thus: *These are they that separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.* I shall not stand now to apply this Prophecy, and as for those who too much resemble these Men, in our Age, and Nation I shall not now examin the Merits of their cause, nor the unreasonableness

reasonableness of the Principles, upon which they have founded their separation. But when I consider, what has been said, and written, in Vindication of our *Church Polity*, our *Episcopacy*, *Liturgy*, *Ceremonies*, and *Discipline*, to which I despair of ever seeing any thing like a tolerable Reply, When I consider the Frivolousness, and Folly of those scruples, and the falseness of those suggestions, that are urg'd against 'em, and the insufficiency of 'em (though they were true) to justify a separation from our Church. When I consider how nice a Distinction has been made, between constant, and occasional Communion, to make the one sinful, and the other very lawful, for no other end, but for the ease of such tender Consciences, as could not hold a beneficial Employment, without Receiving the Sacrament kneeling : And when I consider, to what a height these scruples are grown since the beginning of the *Reformation*, how different, the Principles, and Practices of a great many of the Modern separatists are, from the Humility and Modesty of the Antient *Puritans*, who being dissatisfid at the *Liturgy*, and *Ceremonies*, forbore the Exercise of their Ministry, because they could not Conform to 'em, but never set up an opposite Church, in spite and defiance of Authority.

When I consider these things, I say, I must confess, I am tempted to believe, that there is somthing more than Religion, and Conscience at the bottom of these matters, that *Lawn Sleeves*, and *Caps*, and *Surplices*, are too mean a quarry for these Men to fly at, and that *Crown's*, and *Scepters*, I mean *Monarchy* in General, is the true and real Grievance.

But what these things onely incline me to believe, I am thoroughly convinc'd of, when I consider that the Leading Men of the *Republican Faction*, though they have been of our Communion themselves, have been always the Patrons, and Abbettors of this Party, and never fail'd to heighten and Animate their Discontents, against the Church, when ever any fair occasion appear'd, of disturbing the Government ; of which these Nations had once the woful Experience, when it pleas'd God, for a Punishment of their Sins, to let these Men succeed in their Attempts.

But above all, the nature, and genius of that *Holy Discipline*,

pline (as they are pleased to call it) which they would fain set up, in the room of our good antient, *Apostolick Constitution*, is an invincible argument, that the Spirit of Democracy runs through the whole contrivance. This holy Discipline was born, and bred in popular tumult, and I believe, it will be hard to shew, that ever it got footing any where, by any other means. In *Geneva*, where it had its first rise, it was manifestly so; and of this we can have no better testimony, than Mr. *Calvin* himself, who (to give him his due) was a man of singular parts, great wisdom, and incomparable learning, and therefore 'tis true, he would have given his *Discipline* a more honourable begining, if he could, by getting it voted, and confirm'd by the Senate, and Magistracy of his City: but being not able to prevail with them, he was forc'd to call in the Rabble to his aid; and to shew you that I do him no wrong, take his own words, in one of his *Epistles to Bullinger*, where giving him an account of what he had done, toward the Reformation of his Church, he tells him, (that being not able to draw over the Magistrates and better sort of Citizens to his party) he had contriv'd the matter so, as to bring in the whole Commonalty to vote, and then says he, *In ista promiscua colluvie, nos suffragis suimus superiores*, which I think we may very modestly translate thus: *When the meanest of the people* (I might say the raff and scum of 'em without any violence to the word *Colluvies*) *came in to vote, then we had the most Voices.* And thus I have dispatch'd the second thing to be consider'd; Who those are that neglect to hear the Church, together with the Principles upon which they do stand; or pretend to stand their disobedience.

I come now in the last place to consider, the fatal Mischiefs, that have been, and still are the undoubted consequences of not hearing the Church: And those are the growth of these three things, *Schism*, *Heretie*, and *Atkeism*, which are now arriv'd to such a height amongst us, that they begin to look formidable; and the Patrons and Abettors of 'em, to fancy themselves too strong for the Laws, both Civil and Ecclesiastical; and how manifestly they tend to the subversion of both, we have not only

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reason, but experience too to assure us. To these we owe that universal corruption of manners, that has so strangely over-run us, that now the horror and shame, that of old attended 'em, begin to be laid aside, and a company of wild and senseless notions concerning God, and Religion, are become the Characters of Wit, and Gallantry, and of a generous subtil understanding.

The first of these, to wit Schism, is surely a Sin, either not so well understood, or not so throughly consider'd, as it should be by Men of tender, and scrupulous consciences in other matters; for let Men varnish it over never so speciously, it is the same thing in the Church, that Rebellion is in the state; and equally displeasing to the supreme Authority, which in the *Church Polity*, is no other than Christ Himself, who has expressly told His Substitutes, that *he that despises them, despises Him*, that *as His Father had sent Him, so He had sent them*; and therefore we are to expect, that He will stand by 'em, in the just and due exercise of that Power, which He has put into their hands. From whence it follows, that to preserve the Peace, and Unity of the Church, is a Duty of a most high, and important obligation, and perhaps in the whole system of the Christian Law, it will be hard to find a Duty, that is pres'd upon the consciences of Men, with plainer Precepts, and stronger Arguments than this is. The places of scripture are so many, that it would be endless to repeat 'em, and the reasons are drawn, from the nature, and design of the Gospel, and from the true notion of that Brotherly Love, and Charity, which is the Life, and Soul of Christianity, and the inseparable badge, and character of Christ's Disciples. But if these arguments will not prevail, yet methinks, all Men that have a true zeal for the *Protestant Religion*, and *Interest*, would do well to Consider, how our common Enemies, the *Papists*, are pleas'd, and delighted, to see these Schisms, and uncharitable divisions amongst us, that the best and surest Game they have to play, is to foment, and continue 'em, to compels which, they never could find a better expedient, than what they so industriously practis'd, for some years, before the late happy Revolution, which was to employ the whole strength of their Interest at Court, to slacken the sinews

of our Discipline, and to bring our *Hierarchy*, and whole Constitution into contempt, the Heads of this Restless party, were wise enough to see, that this was the only way, to establish Popery once again amongst us. 'Tis very well known, how upon the first abolishing of *Episcopacy* in *England* they Triumph'd at *Rome*, as if their great Enemie were fallen; and *Cardinal Barberini* has been heard to say Publickly, that he could be very well content, there were no Priests in *England*, provided there were no *Bishops* there; and the great contrivance of universal *Toleration*, (every body knows) was a Popish project; the comprehension was made so large, that like the *Trojan Horse*, it might be too big to come in at our Gates, and so we must pull down our Walls, to let it in, for no other end, but that the common Enemie, who were to Burn, and Destroy all before 'em, might come in unseen, in the Belly of it. Methinks every True and Hearty Protestant, ought to consider these things, and to take care, that no by-ends, or ill-grounded scruples, should Bias his understanding, or betray him into so hainous, and provoking a Sin as a causeleis separation from the communion of the Church, must needs be; if for no other reason, yet for this, that it is the only effectual means in the World, to promote the Designs, and Interests of the common Enemie, of our Reformation.

The next ill consequence of not hearing the Church, is the Growth of Heresie. This *St. Paul*, *Gal. the 5th. and the 20th.* reckons among the *Works of the Flesh*. In old time when Men look'd upon themselves, as oblig'd in conscience, to hear the Church, this was a frightful thing: our blessed Saviours Parable of the *Tares*, the mischief that they did to the good Seed, and his declaring, that it was the Enemie that sowed them, lest more than ordinary impressions, in those good Days, upon the minds of Men. They had such a value, for that *Faith which was once deliver'd to the Saints*, and which so many *Apostles*, and *Martyrs*, had Seal'd with their Blood, as to think it very well worth their while, to preserve it, from being corrupted, by the false glosses, and fanciful interpretations, of a few wanton *Critiques*, which are now as much esteem'd, and as greedily imbrac'd, as the Determinations

minations of a whole *General Council*. We do not pretend to ascribe Infallibility, to any Man, or number of Men whatsoever; but methinks the antiquity, and univeral reception of those Doctrines which we call the *Fundamentalls of Christianity*, ought to carry some weight with 'em, amongst thinking Men, at least might secure 'em from that Rude and Insolent treatment, which they have had, from every little Scribler, that thinks it worth his while to write against 'em. But if these things be Conniv'd at in the Laity, I mean such of 'em, as have no great veneration for the Churches Power, and loye to have their share in every Indulgence; yet methinks, it is a deplorable thing, that amongst Men of a Sacred Function, there should be the least suspition, of this mischief prevailing. I hope the severest censures of the Church, will not be wanting, against such amongst us as shall give the least countenance to these vile doings, though we have been so unhappy, as to see in our neighbour Nation, in the Universities themselves, *Iliacos intra muros*, Men of Fame and Eminence, and high Station among the Learned, who have endeavour'd to draw off the Dreggs, and Lees of *Arianism*, to Intoxicate the *Weak and unstable*, and do despite to the Person, and God-head of our blessed Saviour Himself, and to the merit and satisfaction of his most precious Blood. And the great variety of Books that every Day appear upon this unlucky Subject, and seem to be the work of no ordinary Pen's, give us reason to fear, that there are many others, who would be very well satisfied, to have the *Racovian Catechism* set up, in the room of that, to which they have given their unfeigned assent and consent.

But the last and worst mischief of all, (and that indeed which includes all the rest) is the Growth of *Atheism*, and *Irreligion*, and an open Prophanation, of every thing that is Sacred, and Scarius amongst Men.

And this we undoubtedly owe, to that neglect, and disregard of the Church censures, which so fatally prevail'd in the late Times, and scarce left any thing, that look'd like Religion amongst us, the Hypocrify that was then in Fashion, being too gross to deserve the name even of counterfeit Piety. So that at last, Men

who lay under no such obligations to dissemble, began to look upon all Religion, as a cheat, and so some by the sway of their Lusts, and Passions, some through want of Ability, or Leisure to Examine things aRight (the Authority of the Church for Repressing, and Punishing their Lew'd and Insolent treatment of Holy things being not at all countenanc'd) fell into down right profess'd *Atheism*, untill by degrees, there arose up a Seet of 'em, who openly, and barefac'd set up for gaining Proselytes to their party, in order to propagate *Blasphemy*, and *Irreligion* in the World, If there were any thing like a Temptation to this horrid Sin, any thing that look'd like pleasure, or profit to arise, from flying in the Face of the *Almighty*, and turning his most Holy Laws into ridicule ; the weakness, or perverseness of humane nature, might in some measure answer, for such an extravagant folly : but there being nothing like this, that can be so much as pretended, is an argument of the utmost effort of the *Devils* Malice, and Cunning that he can draw Men in to serve him without wages, and persuade rational creatures, to ruine themselves Eternally, only to gratify the most odd, unaccountable vanity in the World.

To imagine that an humour like this should be the means of some witty Patron or Defender of it, spread it self among the People, in a rude and barbarous Nation, where all Piety, and Sense of Religion, are as great strangers to the minds of Men as Learning, and Good Manners, perhaps were not so strange ; but that in a Nation professing the best of Religions, amongst a People, whose genius inclines 'em to Civility, and good Morals, nay and amongst that part of the People, whose Birth, and Education entitle 'em, to give the Laws of civil demeanor, to the rest of the People, there should be any found, that should despise the Laws, and Worship of the Most High God, make sport with their own Prophanes, and make so light a thing of being damn'd, is certainly a thing not to be Parallel'd.

And these are the mischiefs, that owe their Birth, and Growth, to Mens not hearing the *Church*, that is, to that contempt, and disregard of her Discipline, and Censures, which of late Years has so fatally prevail'd amongst us : Methinks it concerns every Man, that

that has any True Zeal for the Interest of his Religion, and Country, or any just Apprehensions of the Divine Vengeance, to lay these things seriously to Heart, and each Man in his Station, to endeavour to redress these growing mischiefs, which (I am persuaded) by the Assistance and Blessing of *God*, upon our rational endeavours, might easily be done, if Men of Reason, and orderly thinking, would but throughly consider the nature, and design of the *Christian Religion*, and the method, that *God* in His Infinite Wisdom, was pleased to make use of, in order to propagate, and preserve it in the World.

That is, that they would consider the Gospel, not only as a *Law*, but as a *Covenant*; that the Condition requir'd of us, as our part of this *Covenant*, is *Faith*, and *Obedience* to the utmost of our Power, together with a sincere, and hearty Repentance, upon every failure in our Duty. That which is to be convey'd on *Gods* Part, is a happy Immortality after this Life, together with *Pardon* and *Peace* here, to which we can claim no Right, or Title upon the account of His bare uncovenanted Mercy, and Goodness, or any inward Holiness of our own, unless we perform our part of the *Pact*; of which we can have no assurance, that we have done it, acceptably to *God*, unless it be don in the Way, that *He* has Prescrib'd, and that must be, by associating our selves to that *Body Politick*, which *He* has been pleas'd to Institute; and by partaking of those *External Federal Rites*, which are the *Seals*, and *Badges* of this *Covenant*. For which purpose, *He* has appointed a sett of Men, to succeed one another from Age to Age; whose business it is, to transact *His* part of this *Covenant*, to dispence *His* Holy *Ordinances*, to Administer the outward marks, and assurances of *His* *Pardon*, and *Grace*, and to Govern this *Body Politick*, according to those *Laws*, and *Precepts*, which *He* has appointed, for the Propagation of that Righteousness, and Holiness of Life, which becomes *His* peculiar People. Their Authority therefore, must needs be from *Him*, and *He* has Declar'd it, so to be, that *He* will *Vouch*, and *Stand* by it, and that *whatsoever they shall bind and loose on earth, He will bind and loose in heaven*.

If Men would but accustom themselves, to think thus of the

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Christian Religion, and fix this notion in their Minds, which is so plain, and evident, from Reason, and from Scripture, and the whole Tenour and Design of the Evangelical Covenant: I am persuaded, it would soon alter the Face of things; there would that deference, and respect be paid, to the Governours of the Church, as would make Piety, and Religion, make some Figure in the World; it would weaken those Factions, that have no way of attaining their ill ends, but by throwing dirt in the Face of our Establish'd Constitution, and crumbling us into sects, and parties, for ever: It would banish from amongst us, those pernicious Heresies, which by the unanimous consent of antiquity, were exploded, as destructive to our most *Holy Faith*, and the true design of Christianity; and it would put to shame and confusion, those rash, and idle Men, who are so insolently vain, as to make sport of *Holy things*, and endeavour to laugh others, as they have done themselves, out of all sense of Religion, it would *make the King's Daughter all Glorious within*, and likewise make her outward splendor Proportionable. In fine let but *God arise* thus amongst us, and *His Enemies will be scattered, and all that hate Him, will flee before Him.*

Whosoever those are, that in their respective stations, shall thus endeavour to advance the Interest of Piety, and true Holiness, and make the profession of 'em, once more fashionable, and creditable 'amongst us, let me make the same wish for 'em, that the Learned, and judicious Considerer of our Ecclesiastical Polity, once made, for all meeting and hearty promoters of Peace, and Order in the Church of God, "May the Blessings of the God of Peace, both in this World, and in the World to come, be upon 'em more than the Stars of the Firmament, in Number.

Errat. pag 14 l. 7. Read, *but for matters in reverberation.*

